

The economic and industrial benefits gained from access to high-tech goods, whether these are used to foster civilian aerospace, communications, or precision-machine industries, will almost always outweigh the potential short-term benefits to be gained from their export, and hence the creation of conditional technology access regimes is likely to be limited primarily by the ability of states to create adequate national export control systems, by the number of participants (which increases the complexity), by the nature of the technologies in question (with such things as software being virtually impossible to control, while items such as precision machine tools being relatively easier to control), and by overall patterns of security cooperation.

It is important to note, however, that conditional technology access regimes are much better suited to controlling dual-use technologies and components than actual weapons systems, which can probably only be addressed in exclusively supply-side controls (as outlined above). This stems from the fact that it is politically problematic to link the trade in weapons systems, which are implicated in national security rhetoric and politically-sensitive patron-client or alliance relationships, to the economic benefits that flow from access to critical technologies. Some of the acrimony in the Chinese-American relationship, for example, stems from the implicit and explicit linkage of Chinese arms export policy with the extension of most-favoured nation (MFN) status for international trade.⁵⁴ It is far easier, on the other hand, to participate in a restraint regime if it concerns dual-use technologies and components, is less politically visible, and is part of an ongoing multilateral process of consultation.

The second type of measure, *conditional technology assistance* relationships, would focus attention not on suppliers of weapons and technology, but on potential recipient/producers or proliferators in the third tier. For the industrialized first and second-tier states which are potential proliferators of advanced conventional military technologies, enhanced *access* to high-technology goods may be sufficient to encourage restraint in military technology transfers, because the public or private sector (nascent or robust) will be able to make use of this access to facilitate investment and economic growth. The levels of economic and industrial development among states within the group of potential suppliers is sufficiently similar that the benefits of access to technology will be tangible and immediate (as are the costs of curtailed access), in the competitiveness of high-tech industrial sectors and the development of national infrastructures (telecommunications, high speed data analysis and transmission, supercomputer applications). But for states in the less-industrialized world, simple *access* will not be a sufficiently powerful inducement to guarantee their participation in technology control regimes. In fact, these states may gain nothing from increased access, unless they have some

⁵⁴ For a good overview see R. Bates Gill, *The Challenge of Chinese Arms Proliferation: U.S. Policy for the 1990s*, report of the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 31 August 1993.